REGIONAL MEETINGS OVERALL SUMMARY

On February 11-13, 2002, public meetings were held in Massachusetts, New Hampshire and Vermont to present an overview of and seek public comment on the Boston to Montreal High Speed Rail Feasibility and Planning Study. Turnout at these meetings was excellent with 30 people attending in Massachusetts, 40 people in Vermont and over 60 people in attendance at the New Hampshire meeting.

Prior to the formal presentation, an open house format was set up at each meeting allowing the public to view informative displays and study materials as well as meet with the study team.

Scott Bascom, Multi-modal Planning Coordinator for the Vermont Agency of Transportation, was introduced at each meeting and provided a description of the study's partnership between Massachusetts, New Hampshire and Vermont as well as their coordination with the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA). Scott also described the history of the high speed rail corridor designationby the FRA, and the emphasis on the international component of the corridor including the team's plans to coordinate with Canada.

Ron O'Blenis of Parsons Brinckerhoff Quade & Douglas, Inc., project manager for the study, moderated the meetings. Ron opened each meeting with an overview of the study. He indicated that while the main emphasis in the study will be conducting a ridership survey to determine demand for the service, the study team will also be looking at existing infrastructure as well as governmental policies and regulations that would support or impede the development of a high speed rail route.

Discussion was lively and people were encouraged to ask questions and make comments during the meetings. Some common themes emerged:

- There was general overall support for the development of this HSR corridor
- Feasibility ought to consider economic and social impacts to the region from high speed rail, not just the number of tickets that can be sold.
- Connectivity to other transportation services is important, including regional airports, bus and other rail.
- Minimizing delays at customs on the US/Canadian border should be a priority.

- Flexibility was desired to serve many needs -equipping trains to store bicycles and skis, providing rail service between cities without making the complete Boston to Montreal run, compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (FRA requirement).
- Understanding the positive and negative impacts of freight service in the corridor.

To read a more detailed summary of each of the meetings use the links below.

- Lowell, Massachusetts
- Concord, New Hampshire
- Montpelier, Vermont